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'Death of a President' a Best-Seller in Eastern Europe

Sofia, Bulgaria, Feb. 10 (AP) — The serialization of William Manchester's "Death of a President" is the new best seller in Communist Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria.

Readers line up eagerly for issues of the controlled newspapers in Prague, Budapest and Sofia which carry long summaries of the excerpts from the book being serialized in Western magazines.

The legal dispute surrounding the serialization and the efforts of the Kennedy family to trim some parts are presented by Communist Party propagandists as evidence supporting the Communist theory that President Kennedy was the victim of a conspiracy.

Bulgarians, who normally are not oversupplied with Western writings, appear to be getting the most extensive extracts from Western magazines.

The 600,000-circulation party newspaper, Rabontnichesko Delo, every Tuesday carries liberal portions from the "unabridged" serialization in the West German magazine Stern.

The Bulgarian party paper pays special attention to anything tending to show Johnson in an unfavorable light.

"This approach is quite different from the usual heavy-handed anti-Americanism that has been part of Bulgarian party propaganda," one Western diplomat said.

"Their version is that Kennedy died of a plot and they are circulating any piece of literature which might cast a slight shadow of doubt on the Warren Report."